



## Fact Sheet:



# **The Therapeutic Community The Most Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is a therapeutic community (TC)?**

It is a highly supervised program which requires abstinence from alcohol and other drugs, and emphasizes self-help, personal growth, and peer support. The Department licenses residential TCs as non-medical alcohol or drug abuse treatment facilities. TCs may also be certified if they request and meet Department certification standards.

### **Who are served by therapeutic communities?**

Therapeutic communities are highly-structured and well-supervised programs designed to treat the behavioral, emotional, and family issues of adult and adolescent substance abusers. Specialized TCs also exist for populations ranging from women with children, to those with concurrent diagnoses of mental illness, to the incarcerated.

### **What takes place in a therapeutic community?**

People in a TC are members of an extended family, not patients in an institution. The essential elements of a TC are: behavioral limits, sanctions and rewards, role modeling, supervised peer confrontation groups, self-help, mutual support, peer pressure, counseling, education, personal and community responsibility, job functions, vocational training, and re-entry into society.

### **How long does a person stay in a TC?**

There are both long and short-term TCs. The length of residential treatment varies from thirty days to two years.

### **In addition to treating substance abuse, what positive impact do TCs have on members?**

Clients in a TC learn to trust others, develop self-esteem, and construct productive, substance-free lives. For many, the TC is their first positive experience of belonging to a family, as well as their first opportunity to complete their schooling and to find—and keep—steady, productive employment.

### **Do TCs work?**

Yes. The TC is a long-term drug free treatment modality whose effectiveness has been rigorously researched. More information on treatment effectiveness can be obtained by contacting the California Therapeutic Communities at the address below.

### **Where are TCs located?**

There are over one thousand TCs across the globe, 25 of which are in California. The facilities range in size from six to more than 300 beds.

### **How are TCs reimbursed for services provided?**

There are various methods by which TCs receive payment for services. Individuals may pay with personal resources or the TCs services may be covered by insurance. Counties contract with TCs to provide services to those who cannot afford services on their own. Other sources of payment include State disability insurance, scholarship beds funded by private donations, and adolescent programs funded through group home fees.

## **Where can I obtain more information on the Therapeutic Communities?**

Contact California Therapeutic Community, c/o Elizabeth Stanley-Salazar, Phoenix Houses of California, Inc., 11600 Eldridge Avenue, Lake View Terrace, CA 91342.